



Guitar or Bass Headless Conversion

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TOOLS:

- [Angle grinder \(1\)](#)
- [Blowtorch \(1\)](#)
- [Drill \(1\)](#)
- [Drill bits \(1\)](#)
- [Jigsaw \(1\)](#)
- [Router \(1\)](#)
- [Screwgun \(1\)](#)
- [Vise \(1\)](#)



PARTS:

- [1/2" screws \(1\)](#)
- [Steel flat stock \(1\)](#)
- [ShapeLock \(1\)](#)

SUMMARY

Here you will learn how to turn an electric bass or guitar into a headless version. In this case it was done out of necessity due to a cracked headstock.

Step 1 — Guitar or Bass Headless Conversion



- A friend of mine gave me a beautiful Dean electric bass that would have been perfectly serviceable save for the giant crack in the headstock. He had tried to make a crude repair with a bolt and a washer which obviously did not hold.
- Not wanting to see such a nice instrument go to waste, I decided to swap the head and the tail; thus a new project was born.

Step 2



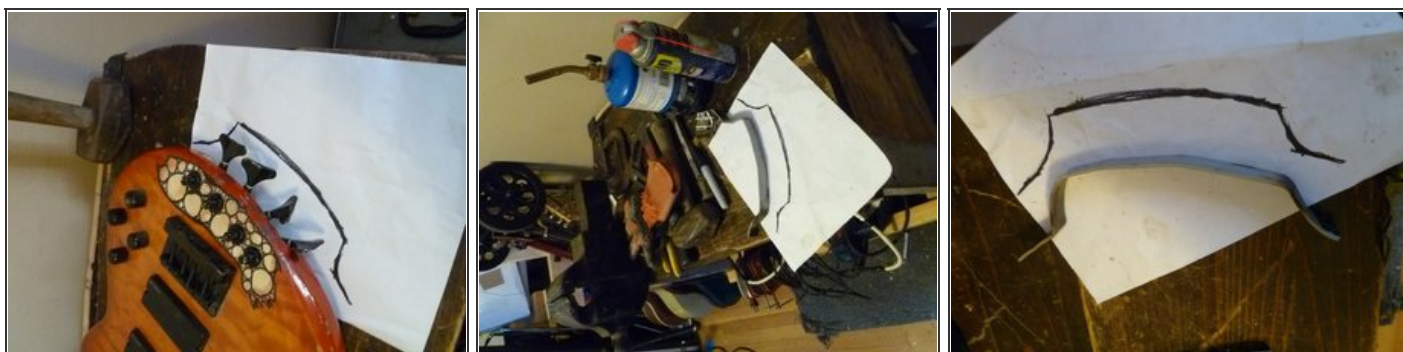
- I lopped off the headstock as close to the truss rod as possible to prepare the bass for the neck plate.
- I traced the contour of the neck's end with a Sharpie and cut a piece of steel with an angle grinder to match the shape.
- I marked where the strings terminated and drilled holes to pass them through. Make sure you de-burr these holes so the strings don't break once you start playing.
- I drilled a hole in the middle of the steel plate to have easy access to the truss rod, then screwed the plate into the neck itself.

Step 3



- To mount the tuning heads on the bottom side of the bass I routed out about 3/4" of material. Make sure you mock up the tuning heads beforehand to ensure a proper fit.
- Go slow with the router. Take off only a little bit of material at a time or the router bit will get too hot.
- After drilling holes through for the tuning heads, I found they didn't quite fit. I took a little material off the top to fix this as I was planning on refinishing the bass anyway.

Step 4



- Now that the tuning heads were mounted, I needed a guard for them so I wouldn't knock my bass out of tune while I was playing. I set the bass on a piece of paper and sketched out what I wanted the guard to look like.
- When I had a shape I was satisfied with, I took a piece of steel flat bar and got to work with my rudimentary blacksmithing skills.
- Using only a hammer, blowtorch, and a cast iron vise as an anvil, I was able to pound out the shape I wanted pretty nicely.

Step 5



- Once I had the guard made I realized the clearance for the tuning pegs wasn't to my liking. To remedy this I stacked some washers and covered them with guitar amplifier handle brackets.
- To fill in the gaps between the washers and the bass body I molded in ShapeLock then painted it in black acrylic. I think it makes for a good look and gave me the opportunity to work with a new material.
- I put on a strap and experimented with where it would sit the best for optimal balance. Then I drilled into the tuning peg guard and bolted in a strap button.

Listed above are the basic tools and parts you'll need for this project, but as you'll see I threw in some other pieces mostly for cosmetic reasons.

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